(b) whether the Alcatel has also proposed to try this Indian technology in its most prestigious telephone network, in Paris; and

(c) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT, ATOMIC ENERGY, ELECTRONICS AND SPACE (SHRI K. R. NARAYANAN): (a) CTT-Alcatel of France has approached the Centre for Development of Telematics for detailed technical information on C-DOT 128-Port Rural Automatic Exchange (RAX) for examining the feasibility of purchasing this equipment from India.

(b) and (c) CIT-Alcatel have not indicated the proposed area of application in France for this technology.

Facilities to the US Navy patrols by Pakistan

*234. PROF. CHANDRESH P THAKUR;

SHRI KAPIL VERMA;

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Pakistan is providing refueling and rest facilities to the US Navy patrols headed for the Persian Gulf from a base near Karachi; and

(b) if so, what is the reaction of Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH): (a) Government have seen such reports.

(b) The setting up of foreign bases or facilities in our neighbourhood adversely affects the security environment of the entire region. Government have made known their concerns in this regard to Pakistan and the USA.

Suggestion for setting up of a National Monsoon Management Centre

♦235. SHRI MAHENDRA PRAS. DR. RATNAKAR PANDE"

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Director of the International Rice Research Institute has recently suggested that Government should take new initiative like the establishment of a National Monsoon Management Centre which could stimulate action aimed at deriving maximum benefits from normal monsoons, minimise the adverse impact of unfavourable weather; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof and Government's decision in regard thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT, ATOMIC ENERGY, ELECTRONICS AND SPACE (SHRI K. R. NARAYANAN): (a) The Government has received no such suggestion.

(b) In view of (a) above, the question does not arise.

Tunnel through Rohtang Pass

*236. SHRI ANAND SHARMA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering a proposal to construct a tunnel through the Rohtang pass in Himachal Pradesh to link the snow-bound labaul valley with the rest of the country; and

(b) if so, by when the work is proposed to be commenced on this project?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI K. C. PANT): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A feasibility study of constructing a tunnel at Rohtang has been sanctioned at an estimated cost of Rs. 82 laths.